

MEDIA RELEASE



**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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Western District of Kentucky**

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PROJECT BACKFIRE NETS AN ARMED HOPKINS COUNTY DRUG DEALER

***– Dawson Springs Police Department catch felon convicted of assault
– Five-time convicted felon had three rifles***

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that on November 2, 2006, **JOSEPH FRANKLIN**, age 24, of 407 Holmes Street, Dawson Springs, Kentucky, **was sentenced** to 5 years in federal prison for possessing a firearm while dealing drugs in order to further his drug trafficking activities. The Court ordered Franklin's sentence to run consecutive to a ten year state sentence that Franklin is currently serving. Franklin was also sentenced to five years of supervised release to begin after the completion of his federal and state prison sentence.

On January 16, 2003, **Franklin** was observed driving without an operator's license in Dawson Springs, Kentucky. Dawson Springs Police approached **Franklin** to question him. Police observed a marijuana cigarette behind **Franklin's** right ear. **Franklin** was arrested and searched incident to his arrest. Police found 13.61 grams of amphetamine, which has a street value of approximately \$1400, in **Franklin's** front pocket. **Franklin** possessed these drugs with the intent

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to sell them. Subsequently, police searched **Franklin's** vehicle which he had just exited when

police

approached. Police found two loaded .22 caliber rifles in the back seat of **Franklin's** vehicle.

Additionally, police found a loaded 30-30 rifle in **Franklin's** trunk. The 30-30 rifle was stolen.

Franklin possessed these weapons in furtherance of his drug trafficking activities.

Prior Convictions

Previously, **Franklin** plead guilty to illegal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree and receiving a stolen firearm in Hopkins Circuit Court for charges stemming from the January 16, 2003 traffic stop by Dawson Springs Police. **Franklin** has also been previously convicted of assault in the second degree and fleeing or evading police in the first degree in Hopkins Circuit Court and unlawful possession of a methamphetamine precursor in the first degree in Butler Circuit Court. **Franklin** is currently serving a ten year state sentence.

This is a Project Backfire prosecution. Project Backfire is a cooperative effort by state and local police departments, such as the Dawson Springs Police Department, and the United States Attorney's Office to ensure that firearm offenses are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the state and federal law.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Brian Butler, and it was investigated by the Dawson Springs Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

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